

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COLOMB 00742 240359 Z

11

ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 NEA-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 EB-11

FMC-04 INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 PA-03 USIA-12

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R 231145 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9275

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USDOC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 742

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, CE

SUBJ: OPENING OF GALLE FISHERY HARBOR FOR USE BY FOREIGN VESSELS

REF COLOMBO 1610, 9 JUNE 72

1. FORMAL CEREMONIES INAUGURATING USE OF GALLE FISHERY HARBOR BY FOREIGN SHIPS WERE HELD ON 15 MARCH. EVEN MARKED CULMINATION OF CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES BEGUN UNDER UNP GOVERNMENT AS PART OF FRENCH FOREIGN AID PROGRAM. OCCASION CELEBRATED BY USUAL PAEANS OF ALL CONCERNED IN SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO MARCH 15 CEYLON DAILY NEWS (CDN) MIN OF FISHERIES GEORGE RAJAPAKSE (SLFP) STATED THAT IS IS PLANNED TO USE HZGHDLMSSE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL DEEP SEA FLEET AND INTERNATIONAL HARBOR FOR FOREIGN VESSELS FISHING IN INDIAN OCEAN. EXPRESSING THEME ECHOED IN CDN EDITORIAL IN MARCH 16 ISSUE, RAJAPAKSE ALSO STATED QUOTE IN VIEW OF THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF THIS HARBOR IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, I AM CONFIDENT THAT IT WILL DEVELOP INTO ONE OF THE LARGEST FISHERY HARBORS IN THE REGION UNQUOTE.

2. FIRST FOREIGN VESSEL TO USE PORT WAS SKIPJACK TRAWLER SEISHO- MARU NO 25 OF JAPANESE FIRM NICHIRO GYOGYO KAISHA. ANOTHER VESSEL OF SAME FIRM EXPECTED TO ARRIVE WITHIN THREE MONTHS TO PARTICIPATE IN TESTING PHASE. ON BASIS AMBASSADOR'S
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PAGE 02 COLOMB 00742 240359 Z

MARCH 21 CONVERSATION WITH FISHERIES MINISTER RAJAPAKSE, AND AMB' S EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH VICE PRES SAKIYAMA OF NICHIRO FIRM, FOLLOWING ARRANGEMENTS APPARENTLY WILL APPLY TO SRI LANKA - JAPANESE AGREEMENT: NICHIRO FIRM WILL FISH FOR SKIPJACK, USING HANDLINE METHOD, FOR ONE YEAR AND FISHING OPERATIONS WILL EXTEND UP TO 112 MILES FROM SRI LANKA. SUCCESS OF PROJECT WILL HINGE IN PART ON ABILITY OF SRI LANKA FISHERMEN TO PROVIDE LIVE BAIT IN REQUIRED QUANTITIES. INITIALLY FIVE CEYLONSE WILL BE PART OF COMPLEMENT OF SEISHO- MARU AND NUMBER OF CEYLONSE WILL INCREASE AS TRAINING CONTINUES. IT IS EXPECTED THAT MORE FISHING VESSELS WILL BE PHASED IN OVER TIME, DEPENDING UPON SUCCESS OF PRELIMINARY EFFORTS. IF RESULTS OF ONE- YEAR TRIAL PERIOD ARE FAVORABLE, NICHIRO HAS AGREED TO ENTER INTO LONG- TERM JOINT FISHERIES PROJECT WITH SRI LANKA. MEANWHILE DURING TRIAL PERIOD IT WILL PAY IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR USE OF GALLE HARBOR FACILITIES.

3. IN ADDITION SRI LANKA- JAPANESE VENTURE, SOUTH KOREAN TRADE MISSION HAS CONFIRMED TO EMBASSY THAT SOUTH KOREAN TRAWLERS PLAN SOON TO USE GALLE HARBOR ON STRAIGHT COMMISSION BASIS UNDER WHICH SOUTH KOREANS WOULD PAY FOR STORAGE FACILITIES AT GALLE.

4. FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT GALLE FISHERY HARBOR INCLUDE 7 COLD STORAGE ROOMS AT MINUS 20 FAHRENHEIT WITH CAPACITY FOR 2, 500 TONS FROZEN FISH AND A DAILY FREEZING CAPACITY OF 12-20 TONS, BASED ON 16 HOUR OPERATING SCHEDULE. BUNERING, A MECHANICAL WORKSHOP WITH 31, 200 SQ FEET FLOOR AREA, TIMER WORKSHOP WITH 6,400 SQ FT CAPACITY AND STORAGE ROOM BUILDING FOR FISHING GEAR ALSO HAVE BEEN PROVIDED ALONG WITH ICE- MAKING EQUIPMENT WITH CAPACITY OF 50 TONS DAILY.

5. COMMENT: SOME OBSERVERS SPECULATE NEPOTISM PLAYED ROLE IN OPENING UP GALLE FISHERY HARBOR TO THE NICHIRO CO. MINISTER OF FISHERIES RAJAPAKSE' S OLDER BROTHER AND FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT LAKSHMAN RAJAPAKSE IS AN EMPLOYEE OF CARGO BOAT DESPATCH CO., LTD., WHICH REPRESENTS NICHIRO IN SRI LANKA. LAKSHMAN RAJAPAKSE IS ALSO ASSOCIATED IN TOURIST HOTEL VENTURE WITH A. L. THAMBIAYAH, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CHAIRMAN OF CARGILLS (CEYLON) LTD., LEADING DEPARTMENT STORE CHAIN. THAMBIAYAH, HIS RELATIVES, AND FRIENDS ARE PRINCIPAL OWNERS AND DIRECTORS OF CARGO BOAT DESPATCH CO.

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PAGE 03 COLOMB 00742 240359 Z

6. EMBASSY WILL TRANSMIT CLIPS OF PERTINENT ARTICLES AND THE
CDN SUPPLEMENT SHEET BY AIRGRAM. DEPT REQUESTED INFORM
COMMERCE OF OPENING OF GALLE FISHERY HARBOR AND TO REQUEST
THEY SEND RELEVANT DETAILS TO POTENTIAL AMERICAN USERS.
EMBASSY HAS NO INFORMATION AT THIS TIME ON DETAILS OF NICHIRO'S
PAYMENT SCHEDULE WITH GSL BUT WILL ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH
WHETHER FEES HAVE BEEN SET ON FIXED BASIS OR WILL BE SUBJECT
TO NEGOTIATION. AMERICAN FIRMS DESIRING FURTHER INFORMATION
MAY CONTACT EMBASSY DIRECTLY OR MR. A. I. MOHIDEEN, DIRECTOR
OF FISHERIES, MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, SIR MOHAMED MACAN MARKAR
MAWATHA, GALLE FACE, COLOMBO 3.
VAN HOLLEN

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